

Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji.

The collective compositions of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Guru Gobind Singh Ji loved everyone irrespective of caste, creed, social status or any other man-made distinction. His concept of love was all-embracing, the concept of Universal Brotherhood which cut across all barriers of caste, colour, clan and country. He received everyone, including those who considered themselves his enemies openly. Generous to a fault, he helped even the hill Rajas who were ever eager and did their level best to trouble him. Guru Ji believed in Akal Purkh, and him alone. Some have put forth that Guru Ji believed in Avatars. They are misled by the Chaubis Avatars (24 incarnations) included in the Dasam Granth. They deduce that since he praised them in verse then he must believe in them also. In reality Guru Ji wrote about them in the language of the people, drawing from the mythological lore current at the time. He wrote about their exploits in glowing terms, using forceful words with telling effect. At the head of this lengthy piece Guru Ji writes about the doctrine of incarnation. This is very appropriate and important as otherwise the reader might mistake this work as an argument in favour of incarnation. Here Guru Ji calls upon the Primordial Being referred to as Kal and Akal who is Time and beyond Time, the sole creator of the so called incarnations and the entire manifest world. Thus this prelude warns the reader that the narrative is not the work of a devotee of any of the incarnations but his aim is to inspire and exhort the reader to fight for a righteous cause, Dharam judh.

The Dasam Granth is a voluminous compilation of more than a dozen compositions some of which, in whole or part, form part of the Sikh daily regime of prayer.

Tradition has it that Bhai Mani Singh who, during his tenure in charge of the Harmandir Sahib (1721 - 34) compiled the granth

as 'Dasam Patshah Ka Granth.' This however was not the only version, an independent collection is said to have been compiled by Baba Deep Singh and a third attributed to Sukkha Singh of Patna. The greater part of the three granths were the same, but there were some differences. In 1885, a committee was set up by the Amritsar Singh Sabha and in 1902 it published its authorized version of the Dasam Granth.

The Dasam Granth is a substantial work comprising of 1428 pages. Four groups of works can be found in it. There is the autobiographical (Bachitra Natak and Zafarnama), there are the devotional works (Jaap Sahib, Akal Ustat, Gian Prabodh and Sabad Hazare). Then there are two works, Swayey and Shastra Mala. The fourth is a collection of mythical narratives - Chandi Charitra, Chandi di var, Chaubis Avtar, Tria Chaitra and Pakhyan Chritra.

Jaap Sahib has at its beginning "Sri Mukhwakh Patshahi Dasmi" "By the holy mouth of the Tenth Master" and is the introductory invocation comprising of 199 verses in different meters. God is described in positive and negative terms and all the verses are in the form of rhymed couplets.

**ਚੱਕ੍ਰ ਚਿਹਨ ਅਰੁ ਬਰਨ ਜਾਤਿ ਅਰੁ ਪਾਤਿ ਨਹਿਨ ਜਿਹ ॥
ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਅਰੁ ਰੇਖ ਭੇਖ ਕੋਊ ਕਹਿ ਨ ਸਕਤਿ ਕਿਹ ॥**

Thou hast no form or feature,
No caste no lineage;
None can describe Thy appearance,
Colour, mark or Garb.

There is an inclusiveness and universalism that keeps coming to the surface. 'All' seems to be a key word.

ਕਿ ਸਰਬੱਤ੍ਰ ਭਾਨੈ ॥ ਕਿ ਸਰਬੱਤ੍ਰ ਮਾਨੈ ॥
ਕਿ ਸਰਬੱਤ੍ਰ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੈ ॥ ਕਿ ਸਰਬੱਤ੍ਰ ਚੰਦ੍ਰੈ ॥੧੧੯॥

Thou art the source of all light,
And the object of all praise;
Thou art the supreme Lord of All,
And the moon of the universe. (vs119)

ਤਮੀਜ਼ੁਲ ਤਮਾਮੈ ॥ ਰੁਜ਼ੁਅਲ ਨਿਧਾਨੈ ॥
ਹਰੀਫੁਲ ਅਜੀਮੈ ॥ ਰਜ਼ਾਇਕ ਯਕੀਨੈ ॥੧੨੩॥

Perfect is Thy discernment.
All turn to Thy for refuge.
Thou art the Great Companion;
Thou art the sure Providence. (vs123)

Guru Ji's devout nature comes to a climax in the concluding verses.

ਚੱਤ੍ਰ ਚੱਕ੍ਰ ਵਰਤੀ ਚੱਤ੍ਰ ਚੱਕ੍ਰ ਭੁਗਤੇ ॥
ਸੁਯੰਭਵ ਸੁਭੰ ਸਰਬ ਦਾ ਸਰਬ ਜੁਗਤੇ ॥
ਦੁਕਾਲੰ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਸੀ ਦਿਆਲੰ ਸਰੂਪੇ ॥
ਸਦਾ ਅੰਗ ਸੰਗੇ ਅਭੰਗੰ ਬਿਭੂਤੇ ॥੧੯੯॥

Thou fillest and feedest the whole universe,
Thyself self-existent, auspicious and united with all.
Thou art the embodiment of mercy;
Thou art the deliverer from birth and death.
Thou art man's constant Companion.
Everlasting is Thy glory. (199)

Guru Sahib Ji had enmity with no one and loved all who came to seek his blessing. Among the thousand names of God in the Jaap Sahib there are seventy five Muslim names, including Rahim,

Karim, Razakai (Nourisher) , Aruv (Pardoner) , Salamai (Peaceful) , Niwaz, Kamal, Rajak Rahim and Bahishtan Niwaz.

In the Jaap, the immortal One is Ajanam, without birth, he is without a body, has no name and no son. He is far from human comprehension, before whom man can but bow and bow again.

The second composition is the Akal Ustat. This is an incomplete work, maybe Guru Ji knowingly left it so since no eulogy of God can ever be complete. It comprises of 271 and a half verses proclaiming the unity of God.

In the opening verse God is addressed as Akal Purkh, Immortal Person; Sarab Loh, All Steel, Sarab Kaal, All Death; and ; later on as Maha Loh, Great Steel; Maha Kaal, Great Death; Asidhuj, Asiketu, Kharagketu, Having a sword on his banner; and Asipani, having a sword in his hand. Thus so early in the composition the Immortal One is pictured 'as the impersonation and source of bravery.'

ਅਲਖ ਰੂਪ ਅਛੈ ਅਨ ਭੇਖਾ ॥
ਰਾਗ ਰੰਗ ਜਿਹ ਰੂਪ ਨ ਰੇਖਾ ॥
ਬਰਨ ਚਿਹਨ ਸਬਹੂੰ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਰਾ ॥
ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਅੱਢੈ ਅਬਿਕਾਰਾ ॥੩॥

He is invisible, indestructible, and
without distinguishing dress;
He is without passion, colour, form or outline;
He is devoid of caste, marks of any kind,
He is the primal Being, peerless and changeless.

In the composition God manifests himself, some times as a beggar, sometimes as a maharaja; sometimes in the hymns of the Hindu, or in the muezzin of the Turk. He assumes all forms: householder, wandering ascetic, snake, bird, singer, dancer, holy

man, soldier. At times he is nectar, or honey, sugar cane or its juice.

While Guru Sahib Ji writes about the Hindu gods he poses questions about some practices.

ਖੂਕ ਮਲਹਾਰੀ ਗਜ ਗਦਹਾ ਬਿਭੂਤ ਧਾਰੀ
ਗਿਦੂਆ ਮਸਾਨ ਬਾਸ ਕਰਿਓ ਈ ਕਰਤ ਹੈ ॥
ਘੁਘੂ ਮਟ ਬਾਸੀ ਲਗੇ ਡੋਲਤ ਉਦਾਸੀ
ਮ੍ਰਿਗ ਤਰਵਰ ਸਦੀਵ ਮੋਨ ਸਾਧੇ ਈ ਮਰਤ ਹੈ ॥
ਬਿੰਦ ਕੇ ਸਧਯਾ ਤਾਹਿ ਹੀਜ ਕੀ ਬਡਯਾ ਦੇਤ
ਬੰਦਰਾ ਸਦੀਵ ਪਾਇ ਨਾਗੇ ਈ ਫਿਰਤ ਹੈ ॥
ਅੰਗਨਾ ਅਧੀਨ ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਮੈ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ
ਏਕ ਗਿਆਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਛੀਨ ਕੈਸੇ ਕੈ ਤਰਤ ਹੈ ॥੧॥੨੧॥

Swine eats filth, elephants and donkeys
bespatter themselves with dust.
Jackals live at places of cremation.
Owls live in tombs, deer wander alone in the forests,
trees ever die in silence;
The man who restraineth his seed
should only have the credit of the hermaphrodite;
Monkey ever wander bare-footed.

ਭੂਤ ਬਨ ਚਾਰੀ ਛਿਤ ਛਉਨਾ ਸਭੈ ਦੂਧਾਧਾਰੀ
ਪੌਨ ਕੇ ਅਹਾਰੀ ਸੁ ਭੁਜੰਗ ਜਾਨੀਅਤੁ ਹੈ ॥
ਤ੍ਰਿਣ ਕੇ ਭਛੱਯਾ ਧਨ ਲੋਭ ਕੇ ਤਜੱਯਾ
ਤੇ ਤੋ ਗਊਅਨ ਕੇ ਜੱਯਾ ਬ੍ਰਿਖਭੱਯਾ ਮਾਨੀਅਤੁ ਹੈ ॥॥
ਨਭ ਕੇ ਉਡੱਯਾ ਤਾਹਿ ਪੰਛੀ ਕੀ ਬਡਯਾ ਦੇਤ
ਬਗੁਲਾ ਬਿੜਾਲ ਬ੍ਰਿਕ ਧਿਆਨੀ ਠਾਨੀਅਤੁ ਹੈ ॥
ਜੇਤੋ ਬਡੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਿਨੋ ਜਾਨੀ ਪੈ ਬਖਾਨੀ
ਨਾਹਿ ਐਸੇ ਨ ਪ੍ਰਪੰਚ ਮਨ ਭੂਲ ਆਨੀਅਤੁ ਹੈ ॥੨॥੨੨॥

They who eat grass and renounce the desire of wealth
are no more the calves and oxen.

They who engage in meditation resemble cranes,
cates and wolves;

For grazing on akk, eating fruits and flowers,
and ever wandering in the forests,
there is no animal like the goat.

ਪੰਚ ਬਾਰ ਗੀਦਰ ਪੁਕਾਰੇ ਪਰੇ ਸੀਤ ਕਾਲ
ਕੁੰਚਰ ਔ ਗਦਹਾ ਅਨੇਕਦਾ ਪੁਕਾਰ ਹੀ ॥
ਕਹਾ ਭਇਓ ਜੋ ਪੈ ਕਲਵੱਤ੍ਰ ਲੀਓ ਕਾਸੀ ਬੀਚ
ਚੀਰ ਚੀਰ ਚੋਰਟਾ ਕੁਠਾਰਨ ਸੋ ਮਾਰਹੀ ॥
ਕਹਾ ਭਇਓ ਫਾਸੀ ਡਾਰ ਬੂਡਿਓ ਜੜ ਗੰਗ ਧਾਰ
ਡਾਰ ਡਾਰ ਫਾਸ ਠਗ ਮਾਰ ਮਾਰ ਡਾਰਹੀ ॥
ਡੂਬੇ ਨਰਕ ਧਾਰ ਮੂੜ ਗਿਆਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਨਾ ਬਿਚਾਰ
ਭਾਵਨਾ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਕੈਸੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਕੋ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਹੀ ॥੧੩॥੮੩॥

In the cold season the jackal barketh five times.
and the elephant and donkey utter various cries.
If anyone were by repeating Gods name to obtain God,
Who cannot be obtained by lip-worship,
then the warbler ever uttereth "Tu hi ! Tu hi !"

Guru Sahib Ji shows futility of man-made divisions.

ਦੇਹਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਔ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਓਈ
ਮਾਨਸ ਸਬੈ ਏਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੋ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਓ ਹੈ ॥
ਦੇਵਤਾ ਅਦੇਵ ਜੱਛ ਗੰਧੂਬ ਤੁਰਕ ਹਿੰਦੂ
ਨਿਆਰੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਦੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਸ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ ॥
ਏਕੈ ਨੈਨ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਨ ਏਕੈ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਨ

They are alike, all the creation of the One.

(Only) There is you, There is you, There is you, There is
you,There is you, There is you, There is you, There is you,

It is said that on the banks of the river Sutlej while Guru Gobind Singh Ji was composing the Akal Ustat he went into a deep trance state (smadhi) and so deeply emersed was he in Akal Purkhs glory that we continued to say 'Tuhi Tuhi, Tuhi Tuhi.....' for hours. It is a tribute to the Sikh scribes who were writing down the bani as Guru Ji was composing it that they filled pages upon pages upon pages of 'Tuhi Tuhi..'. When Guru Ji opened his eyes he decided in his wisdom only to use two lines of this so as to keep within the poetic structure of the composition.

Guru Sahib Ji commences the Akal Ustat with an invocation to the God of war, the All Steel and ends with an attitude of tolerance that pictures the Hindus and Muslims and peoples in widely scattered parts of the world seeking the same God and being blessed by Him.

Third in order is the Bachitra Natak (The wondrous Drama) which is also an incomplete autobiography of the Guru. The date of the composition of the Natak is given by Macauliffe as 1692, when Guru Sahib Ji was twenty six years old. It is divided into fourteen chapters written in Hindi with a large mixture of Sanskrit. Praise of the Immortal and an account of Guru Ji's ancestors and his own life form the main subjects of the Natak. A picture emerges of the ideal warrior-saint.

The warrior strain appeared in the ancestors of old. Their Aryan forebears conquered all northern India, singing the hymns of the Vedas as they went. These vedic Aryans were the original warriors-saints and the ideal of the warrior-saint dominates the Sikhs to this day. It was this militant strain in the Punjabis that Guru Sahib Ji appealed to so successfully when the pressure of outward aggression united them in the fellowship of the Khalsa.

The history of the Bedi and Sodhi families is given in the second, third and forth chapters. It shows in vivid fashion the quarrelsome nature but at the same time the flexibility of character

of Guru Jis ancestors, whereby warriors turned scholars, ascetics into rulers and rulers into ascetics with the minimum of friction.

The composition starts thus :

I bow with heart and mind to the Holy Sword.

ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਖੜਗ ਕੋ ਕਰੋਂ ਸੁ ਹਿਤੁ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ॥

ਪੂਰਨ ਕਰੋਂ ਗਿਰੰਥ ਇਹ ਤੁਮ ਮੁਹਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੧॥

Assist me that I may complete this Granth

The Sword cuts sharply, destroys the host of the wicked,

ਖਗ ਖੰਡ ਬਿਹੰਡ ਖਲ ਦਲ ਖੰਡ ਅਤਿ ਰਣ ਮੰਡ ਬਰ ਬੰਡ ॥

ਭੁਜ ਦੰਡ ਅਖੰਡ ਤੇਜ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡ ਜੋਤਿ ਅਮੰਡ ਭਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਭੰ ॥

ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਾ ਕਰਣੰ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣੰ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਹਰਣੰ ਅਸਿ ਸਰਣੰ ॥

ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜਗ ਕਾਰਣ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਬਾਰਣ ਮਮ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰਣ ਜੈ ਤੇਗੰ ॥੨॥

And has the power to make the battlefield glorious.

It is an unbreakable shaft in the hand,

It is very sharp and its flash pales the radiance of the sun.

The sword brings peace to the saints.,

Fear to the evil minded, destruction to sin,

So it is my refuge.

Hail ! Hail to the Creator of the world.

The Saviour of creation, my Preserver in every way.

Hail ! O sword.

Everlasting Light, Uncreated Form,

God of great Gods, King of great Kings.

Without body, everlasting,

Without form or disposition,

All Powerful - Hail, wearer of the Sword.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji describes his call to the guruship in the sixth chapter:

When I was performing austerities and meditating on Maha Kaal on the lofty Hem Kund in the high Himalayas, I became absorbed in the Immortal One and became one with the Lord. My mother and father also served the Lord with great devotion. I did not wish it, but the order came for me to take birth in Kal Yuga (present age of darkness). The Immortal One told me how first the demons were created, but they trusted in their own arms and so were destroyed. Then the gods were created, but they became proud (worshiped their own strength) and called themselves Parmashur (Supreme God). Maha Dev (Shiv Ji) called himself The Imperishable; Vishnu appointed himself Parmashur; Brahma stated that he was Par Brahm (Supreme Brahma); but none of them knew the true Lord. Then the Lord created the eight witnesses (Earth, Sun, Moon, Fire, Wind, Water etc) but people began to worship them. Some people worshiped stones, some worshiped water and became ensnared in egoism. the Siddhs and Sadhs likewise found their own Panths (sects) and went astray in quarrels and pride. Datta Traiya was created, he only let his finger nails grow and matted his hair, but he failed to meditate on the love of Hari. Gorakh made disciples of great Rajas, but only taught them to split their ears and put in earrings. Ramanand became a Bhairagi and wore a wodden necklace, but forgot the Lord. All the great souls only founded their own sects. Muhammad was ordained King of Arabia by the Lord, but he only taught circumcision to his devotees. He caused his own name to be repeated and did not proclaim the True Name. So the Immortal one said to me,

ਮੈ ਅਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੋਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ॥

ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਚੁਰ ਕਰਬੇ ਕੱਹ ਸਾਜਾ ॥

ਜਾਹਿ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਚਲਾਇ ॥

ਕਬੁਧਿ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਟਾਇ ॥੨੯॥

"I have glorified you as my son,

I have created you to proclaim the panth;

Go, spread the faith there,
and restrain the people from folly."

ਠਾਢ ਭਯੋ ਮੈ ਜੋਰਿ ਕਰ ਬਚਨ ਕਹਾ ਸਿਰ ਨਿਆਇ ॥

ਪੰਥ ਚਲੈ ਤਬ ਜਗਤ ਮੈ ਜਬ ਤੁਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੩੦॥

I stood up and made obeisance and said,
"This Panth will spread in the world when
Thou givest assistance."

For this reason the Lord sent me; then i took birth and came into this world. What he spoke that I speak and I bear no enmity to anyone. Those who call ne Parmashur shall fall into the pits of Hell; Know me as his slave only, have no doubt about that. I am the slave of the Supreme Being and have come to behold the spectacle of the world; What the Lord told me, that I tell the world and I will not remain silent through fear of mortals.

I have come into this world for this purpose, For the sake of faith the divine Guru sent me: "Wherever you extend the faith, Seize and hurl down evil deceivers." For this very purpose we have taken birth - All you saints understand this in your heart, to spread the faith, to protect the saints, and to chastise all evildoers.

These verse bring out both sides of Guru Sahib Ji's mission. Evildoer were to be destroyed and the true faith of loving devotion to the Supreme Lord was to be extended in the world by peaceful proclamation. The two-fold nature of this mission called for the Saint-soldier.

The battle of Bhangani is described in the Bachittar Natak. In it the contingent of Udasi Saddhus had deserted Guru Sahib Ji and left the battle field on the approach of the enemy, but one stayed at Guru Ji's side.

Kirpal, the chief of the Udasis, now advanced on horse back and asked permission to engage Haiyat Khan. Guru said 'O, holy saint, thou cannot kill him with thy words.' Kirpal Chand, Guru Ji's uncle overheard the conversation and seeing that the mahant was filled with martial enthusiasm, prayed the Guru let him engage Haiyat Khan. Guru Ji enquired with what weapon the mahant was going to contend with his adversary. 'With a club.' Guru Ji smiled and said 'Go mahant Ji, and engage the enemy.' It was a spectacle to see the mahant with his matted hair twisted around his head, his body only clothed with a thin plaster of ashes, and his belly projecting in front of him in his saddle, proceeding to engage a practiced warrior with his latest weapons of destruction.

When the mahant approached and challenged Haiyat Khan the latter saw that he had no warlike weapon and consequently retreated from him, scorning to attack a defenseless man. The onlookers were amused and said 'How can that faqir contend with a Pathan?' The mahant however continued to challenge Haiyat Khan. Khan now confronted the faqir and aimed a blow of his sword, which the latter received on his club. The mahant now addressed him 'Now hold thy ground and defend thyself from me.' The mahant rose in his stirrups and wielding his club with both hands struck Haiyat Khan with such force on the head that his skull broke and stained the battlefield.

We then find three compositions on Chandi - Chandi Charitra Ukti Bilas, Chandi Charitra and Sri Bhaguti Ji Ki. The first two are written in Braj or ancient Hindi while the third is written in Punjabi. In all three compositions the buffalo headed demon (dainty) Mahakhasar does battle with the gods and defeats them. The god Indra appeals to Chandi for help. A bloody battle follows, and whoever are struck by her arrows "never even ask for water" but die instantly. Finally she kills and triumphs over the demon. Two notorious demon brothers Sumbh and Nisumbh succeed to the rule and again Indra is defeated in battle.

The hair of the heads of the slain floated in a sea of blood like scum, the tips of chariots moved about in the froth; Severed fingers writhed like fish, cut-off arms like snakes. Horse's bodies moved like serpents, banners waved like trees. And in the sea of blood chariot wheels floated about in whirlpools.

The two daints win and with their increased confidence ask Chandis hand in marriage. With this, Dhrum Nain is killed in the battle that follows and the demon army of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants are burnt to a cinder by Chandis wrath. Others are sent to bring in Chandi dead or alive and the battle continues, with Chandi the tiger rider victorious at the end. In the battle with Rakat Bij (Blood Seed), each drop of blood falling on the ground produced another fully armed Rakat Bij to continue the fight; so Kali, coming forth from Durga's head helped by drinking up the blood.

Near the end of Chandi Charitra I, occurs this well-known shabad:

ਦੇਹ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਟਰੋਂ ॥
ਨ ਡਰੋਂ ਅਰਿ ਸੋਂ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰੋਂ ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰ ਅਪਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੋਂ ॥
ਅਰੁ ਸਿਖ ਹੋਂ ਆਪਨੇ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਕੋ ਇਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਹਉ ਗੁਨ ਤਉ ਉਚਰੋਂ ॥
ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਨੈ ਅਤ ਹੀ ਰਨ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋਂ

॥੨੩੧॥

O Shiva (God addressed in the form of Shiva),
grant me this boon,
That a may never avoid doing a good deed,
Never fear the enemy when I go into battle,
But surely go on to victory;
That I mat teach myself this greed alone,
To sing only of Thy praises.
And when the last days of my life come,
I may die in the mighty field of battle.

Var Sri Bhagauti Ji, or Chandi Di Var, is in Punjabi. Dharam Pal Ashta in his writings rates it as one of the finest Punjabi poetri written. In it images abound: Arrows fall thick as heavy showers. Deadly bolts come hissing like snakes. Soldiers are locked in deadly combat like he-buffaloes.

The first verse of the var is known as the Sikh prayer of Ardaas as it invokes the names of the holy Gurus. Having first remembered the Sword, meditate on Guru Nanak, Then on guru Angad, Amar Das and Ram Das; may they assist me. Remember Arjan, Hargobind and the holy HarRai; Meditate on the holy Harkrishan, a sight of whom dispelles all sorrows. Remember Tegh Bahadur and the nine treasures shall come hastening to your homes. Ye holy Gurus, everywhere assist me !

The Chandi Vars are followed by Gian Prabodh. This consists of 336 verses, the opening 125 are a eulogy of God as in the Akal Ustat and the rest are riddles and stories from the Mahabharata. The tales include those of Raja Yudhishtra, Arjun, Bhimsain and Sahudav

What follows next is the Chaubis Avtar, which lists twenty four Avtars, of these, the accounts of Rama (864 verses) and Krishna (2496 verses) are the longest. These accounts are not mere adaptations from the Puranas, but they have been retold with a shift in emphasis and reinterpreted so as to fall in line with Sikh thought.

The fish, Machh Avtar	The tortoise, Kachh Avtar	The lion, Narr Avtar	Narayan Avtar
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Maha Mohini Avtar	The Boar, Varha Avtar	Nar Singh	Bawan Avtar, the dwarf
Paras Ram	Braham Avtar	Rudr Avtar	Jalandhur Avtar
Vishnu	Buddha Avtar	Arhant, the Jain	Manu Raja
Dhanatar, the physician	Suraj, the sun	Chandra, the moon	Rama Avtar
Krishan Avtar	Nar, Arjan	Bodh	Kalki Avtar

At the time it was the custom to recite on the eve of battle the praises and warlike deeds of the brave, so that the hearts even of cowards might be inspired with eagerness of the fray. On that account Guru Sahib Ji maintained fifty two bards to translate the Mamahbarat, the Ramayan and the gallant achievements of Sri Ram Ji and Bhagawan Krishan Ji and others. It does not follow from this that Guru Sahib Ji worshipped those whose acts were thus celebrated. This was done only for the purpose of inciting bravery, dispelling cowardice and filling the hearts of the Sikhs with valour to defend the faith. At the end of Ram Avtar is found a special blessing on those who hear and those who sing this story, and thanks are given to God for help in completing the story of Sri Ram Chander Ji. Guru Sahib Ji says that he does not accept the opinions of the Puranas or of the Quran, nor the doctrine of the Simrities, Shastas or Vedas. Guru Ji says he is only the mouthpiece of Aspani, the Sword-Bearer himself (vs 863).

In the concluding of Ram Avtar, it is stated that the book is finished in the year 1755 Bikrami (AD 1698) in the month of Har (June-July) on the bank of the Sutlej River near the foot of the NainaDevi Mountain. It is stated in the Krishan Avtar, that 1192 verses were completed at Anadpur Sahib and that the remaining 1300 verses were written at Paonta Sahib.

Machh Avtar rescues the Vedas from the ocean, where they were carried by the demon Sankh. A battle between the fish armies and the demons is described, with the Huries (heavenly beauties) gloating in anticipation of many slain heroes. In the end the demons are defeated.

Kachh Avtar supports the Mandarachal Mountain while the Gods churn the ocean to secure the fourteen jewels in it.

In Nar Narayan, the demons are not satisfied with the distribution of the loot from the churning, so another battle takes place between them and the Gods. Nar Singh battles for eight days and nights to rescue Bhagat Parhlad from the wrath of Raja Hiranachh who is finally clawed to death.

In the story of Paras Ram, the Chhatris stole the calf of Kemdhenu, the Wonder Cow and killed Paras Ram's father. A battle follows in which the mighty warrior-Brahmin, Paras Ram eventually kills the guilty rajas with an axe and finishes off the rest of the Chhatris.

In Rudhr Avtar, the population problem is solved when Rudhr destroys enough wicked people to ease the situation.

Arhant was a Jain. He put an end to sacrificial ceremonies, he taught there was no need for a creator, not of ceremonial bathing so the demons who had taken over from the gods by performing vedic rites became weak and were easily destroyed. Raja Manu was then sent as an incarnation of Vishnu, and he wrote the Manu Smriti and so brought back the people from the delusions of Jainism.

Dhanantar Veid, the physician, wrote the Ayur Veda to cure the ills of people.

The chariot of the Sun Avtar was hindered by the demon Diragh Kaya and a battle followed in which the sun's arrows finally win through. The Chandra, moon became proud and committed adultery with the wife of Brahmin Brahaspati. Both Brahaspati and Gotum Muni cursed him, hence the dark spots on the moon and the waxing and waning from shame.

The last incarnation is Kalki. He is to come in the Kali age, "the age of ignorance and spiritual darkness." The world has fallen deep in sin, family life has broken down, castes are in confusion, religious sects multiply. Then, "to destroy all sin, Kalki will come in Kal yug to establish righteousness." A terrific battle between the forces of good and evil will follow.

Kalki at last became strong and proud, and the Lord was displeased and created another being, Mihdi Mir who was great and powerful and destroyed Kalki and became master of the world. All is in the hands of God. In this passed the twenty four manifestations.

Following the Chaubis Avtar are several smaller compositions in different musical meters. These ten verses are known as Shabad Hazaray and would take perhaps five minutes to recite. Several raags are used: Ramkali, for singing at dawn, Sorath, for midnight, Kalyan, for the evening, Tilang Kafi, for the afternoon, Bilawal, for noon in a joyous mood and Devgandhari, four hours after sunrise. These verses exhort men to worship only the one God and not His manifestations or His creation. "Worship none but the Creator, not the creation (vs5).

This includes a shabad in Punjabi, another on the Khalsa known as Khalsa Mahima and Shashtra Nam Malla, listing a catalogue of weapons praised as deliverers and protectors. Five different weapons - Sword, Chakra, arrow, pash (noose of cotton and leather) and gun - are referred to comprising of 1318 verses.

The weapons are given fanciful names, like for the arrow - Bow-roarer, Skin-piercer, Deer-slayer.

The opening verse sets the mood:

ਸਾਂਗ ਸਰੋਹੀ ਸੈਫ ਅਸ ਤੀਰ ਤੁਪਕ ਤਲਵਾਰ ॥

ਸੱਤ੍ਰਾਂਤਕ ਕਵਚਾਂਤਿ ਕਰ ਕਰੀਐ ਰੱਛ ਹਮਾਰ ॥੧॥

The three kinds of swords are sure and friendly deliverers,
Finishers of the enemy, armor-piercers,
They make sure our protection.

The Charito Pakhyon is the longest composition with 7559 verses. This is a collection of Indian and foreign tales wherein consequences of adulterous and immoral relations of men and women have been described. It is not just the wiles of women that are presented here, rather several stories deal with the wiles of men also. The main thrust of these stories is to remain faithful to one's spouse.

There are 78 tales of the bravery, devotion and intelligence of women. 269 stories of deceitfulness and unscrupulousness of women with 26 of men. 10 stories on the folly of gambling, drinking, opium-eating and there are 21 folk tales. 404 tales in all.

Hikayatan follows with 752 verses and 11 stories. All that the salutation of the Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ka khalsa. They are supposed to contain moral instruction for the emperor Aurangzeb.

The Zafarnama is in Persian and is a historical document, a letter from Guru Gobind Singh ji to the Emperor Aurangzeb. The opening 12 verses are an invocation whereas the following part describes the treachery of the Emperors viceroys and generals. As the title suggests (Epistle of Victory) Guru Ji always firmly believed in the ultimate victory of Good over Evil.

Guru Sahib Ji rebukes Aurangzeb for breaking his oath taken on the Quran. This refers to the treachery of his generals in the Battle of Anandpur when, after promising safe conduct to Guru Ji's forces for leaving the city, they attacked and looted, only to find that Guru Sahib Ji had anticipated treachery and filled the baggage sacks with rubbish. Guru Sahib Ji calls the emperor 'Paiman Shikan', 'Oath Breaker.' The Zafarnama is said to have shaken the emperor and as his end was coming near he realised the his folly. The last days of the emperor were sad, and in contrast to the hope in victory that buoyed up Guru Sahib Ji, Aurangzeb felt that his life had offered him defeat.

The collection of Guru Gobind Singh Ji's writings are known as the Dasam Granth.

They consist of eighteen works written in four languages: Braj (frequently highly Sanskritised), Hindi, Persian and Punjabi. The Dasam Granth can be conveniently divided into three: Mythological, philosophical and autobiographical.

The largest portion is mythological and is devoted to retelling well known tales of Hindu mythology. The Chandi Charitra I and II and Var Bhaguti Ji Ki (Chandi di var) recount the battles of the deity Gurga and the Chaubis Avtar are tales of the incarnations of Vishnu.

It is a common misconception by some ignorant people that Guru Gobind Singh ji worshipped the deities he wrote about. They are misled by the compositions on Sri Ram Chandra Ji, Baghwan Krishan Ji, Vishnu in the Chaubise Avtar and the vars of Chandi. They assume that since Guru ji praised them in verse, he must have admired and worshipped them also. These learned persons fail to recognise the fact that nowhere in his writings does Guru Ji accept them as anything other than the creations of the Formless Akal.

In reality Guru Sahib Ji wrote about them in the language of the people drawing from the mythological lore current at that time. He wrote about their exploits in colourful martial language to raise courage in the hearts of all who read them. It is meaningless to make one's own deductions ignoring the words of the Guru which are very clear.

Guru Ji writes in the Akal Ustat (Eulogy to God)

The Lord Akal creates millions of Krishna,
annihilates them and recreates them.
Some hang stones as gods around their necks,
while others erroneously call Mahesh 'God'

I have discarded all these false religions and am of the firm view that He who is the creator of the Universe, is the only Lord.

Everyone is caught in the noose of Death, no Rama or prophet can escape from it. All of them who made grand claims of being Avatars of God died repentant. Why doest not thou, O, hapless being seek the shelter of the One Lord. (15th swayya)

In clear concise language Guru Sahib Ji states:

ਮੈ ਨ ਗਨੇਸ਼ਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਮਨਾਊਂ ॥
ਕਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਿਸ਼ਨ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨਹ ਧਿਆਊਂ ॥
ਕਾਨ ਸੁਨੇ ਪਹਿਚਾਨ ਨ ਤਿਨ ਸੋਂ ॥
ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗੀ ਮੋਰੀ ਪਗ ਇਨ ਸੋਂ ॥੪੩੪॥

I do not seek the blessings of Ganesh,
I do not worship Krishna or Vishnu.
I do not recognise them.
I am engrossed in the loving devotion of my Lord alone.
The Lord of Death, Akal, is my refuge
and He saves me in all tribulations.
(Krishan Avtar, 434)

At the start of every composition in the Dasam Granth, Guru Ji first praises the One formless God and asks for his blessing before he continues - in the case of Chandi Di Var's, Var Bhaguti Ji Ki and Chaubis Avtar - to tell the exploits of various deities and Avatars. Why then do some learned people think that in these compositions Guru Gobind Singh Ji (who sought the protection of Akal Purkh only) was worshipping the deity?

Take the composition Var Bhaguti Ji Ki, this tells how the goddess Durga Devi was called upon by Inder Devta to help him in destroying the demons Sumb and Maha Kahsur and their legions. First and foremost Guru Ji bows and pays homage to Sri Bhaguti (God) and then recounts the names of the nine Gurus. He then says that you (God) created the world and that it was from you that Durga, Sri Ram Ji and Baghwan Krishan Ji got the strength to destroy their enemies.

Var Sri Bhaguti Ji

First and foremost I remember Bhaguti Ji and then set my mind on Guru Nanak. Then I seek the help of Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das. Arjan, Hargobind and (Guru) Har Rai be remembered. Sri Harkrishan be meditated upon whose mere glimpse removes all sorrows. (Guru) Tegh Bahadur be remembered as it causes home to flourish. They all help me at all times.

The Lord first created Khanda, the double edged sword and then his manifest world. Having created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, He created the entire play of Kudrat (manifest world). He created the oceans, mountains, earth and sky which stands above, unsupported by any pillars. He created both gods (deities) and demons and then created polemic. It was You who created Durga so as to destroy the demons. Rama also took strength from you to kill Ravan with his arrow. Krishan also got strength from You and thus threw down Kansa by his hair. Many great deities and

ascetics underwent hard austerities, but none could fathom thy greatness.

As can be seen from this opening passage that Guru Gobind Singh Ji draws all his strength and inspiration from the one formless God, Akal Purkh. He says that Durga was created by You, O Lord. How then can Guru Ji be worshipping Durga?

Sri Akal Ustat

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ
ਉਤਾਰ ਖਾਸੇ ਦਸਖਤ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

Realized through the grace of the True Protector;
Copy of the original in the hand of the Tenth Guru.

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਰੱਛਾ ਹਮਨੈ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਦੀ ਰੱਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥
ਸਰਬ ਕਾਲ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਰੱਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸਦਾ ਰੱਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥

Blessed am I with the protection of Akal; Available to me is the defense of Sarbloh (All Steel) Blessed am I with the shield of Sarbkal; Available ever is the protection of Sarbloh.

Salutations to the Primal Ek Onkar, He permeates over the earth and sea. He is Primal Being, unmanifest and indestructible. His spirit pervades all the fourteen regions.

The opening passage of the Akal Ustat (eulogy to God) makes no mistake as to whose protection Guru Ji seeks.

Bachitra Natak

ੴ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ ॥
ਅਥ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਲਿਖਯਤੇ ॥
ਤ੍ਵ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਮੁਖਵਾਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦॥
ਦੋਹਰਾ ॥

ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਖੜਗ ਕੋ ਕਰੋਂ ਸੁ ਹਿਤੁ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਕਰੋਂ ਗਿਰੰਥ ਇਹ ਤੁਮ ਮੁਹਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੧॥

Victory be to the wondrous Lord.
Now commences the writing of the Bachitra Natak Granth.
From my heart and soul
I salute the double-edged sword (God).
I invoke you to help me complete this granth

The opening passage of Guru Ji's autobiographical composition the Bachitra Natak calls upon God in the form of the double edged sword (Khanda) to help him successfully complete the granth.

Every composition starts this way, then why is it that some people say that Guru ji worshipped this devi or that , if it was not for mischief making?

Guru Ji's writings have a universal appeal, they touch the tender strings of the human heart with the strains of the brotherhood of Man. They arouse one with martial spirit with graphic descriptions of battle scenes, bringing the battle field alive before ones eyes. The neighing of the horses, the groaning and wounded warriors, the clash of weapons and the clamour of war. The descriptions of the battle scenes are steeped in extremely vigorous staccato rhythm often reduced to lines of one word. The battles waged by Chandi and Guru Ji's encounters with the hill rajas at Bhangani and Naduan are amongst the most stirring. All the mythological compositions have been written in such a way as to put a Sikh slant on them so that they fall in line with Sikh philosophy and thought. At no point does Guru Ji 'worship' these deities, these compositions were written to rouse the spirit of a

people who had forgotten the taste of freedom, who held their heads low as slaves.

The Charitro Pukhyan

It has been said by some people who regard themselves as interlectuals that passages like the Charito Pukhyan cannot be the compositions of Guru Gobind Singh Ji as they are tales of the wiles of women and full of erotic imagery.

All around you one sees the ruchna or creation of Akal Purkh. He has created the good things and the bad things. Akal Purkh has created the plants, and trees, the natural beauty of the forests and the wilderness. He has also created good people, Sants, Mahapursh, Rishis, Munies, people with goodness in their hearts. He has also created the bad people, the oppressors, tyrants, murderers and thieves, the swindlers and the crooks and those people who are stuck in the clutches of Kaam. All is his khale or play – the good, the bad and the ugly.

So, if everything is as He wills it then why is it so difficult to accept that the Gurus wrote about it also. If the Gurus have written about the good things in a man's heart and the good things he can achieve then it follows that they can and must write about the seedier side of life and existence also. This is exactly what Guru Gobind Singh has done with the Charitro Pukhyan. Guru Ji has written about the wiles of not just women but about the bad deeds of men also, so that we as Sikhs, members of the Khalsa are aware of the traps and pitfalls, so that we can avoid them.

Guru Sahib Ji has written in the Sarb Loh Granth

Khalsa mero roop hai khaas.
Khalsay may hau karo nivaas
Khalsa is my form and shape

In the Khalsa I reside in spirit

This is how close Guru Sahib Ji regards himself to the Khalsa so it follows that Guru Ji wants to protect and make us aware of what goes on in the area of Kaam so that we are fully prepared for any eventuality. Also, these erotic passages are what happens in the world around us, this is part of the khale or ruchna that is around us, Guru Ji is simply writing as things stand. It is only the way that our clouded mind interprets it that is wrong. Guru Sahib Ji is writing nothing wrong, Guru Sahib Ji is writing as things are, for the Gurus mind is pure and he writes as he sees, it is our minds that takes the false root, for kaam or lust takes over our minds when we read these passages and we start to judge Guru Sahib Ji with our own inadequate standards, it is us who are wrong, not the Guru.

One has also to understand that if this composition was not of Guru Sahib Ji's hand, then why would Guru Sahib Ji select one of the passages from it (Bainty Chaupai) to be part of the five banis (prayers) that all Khalsa members must recite on a daily basis?

The following is a list of prominent scholars who agree that the Dasam Granth is the work of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

In 1902 A.D., Bhai Bishan Singh of Sangrur, son of Bhai Gurdiyal Singh Anandpuri, wrote the book Dasam Granth Sahib Kisne Banaiya? ("Who Created the Tenth Granth?"). According to the method and style of the writings and much other evidence, he proved that the Dasam Granth was written by Guru Gobind Singh.

In 1935, Bhai Sher Singh of Kashmir wrote a book, Dasmesh Darpan ("Mirror of the Tenth Guru") in which he gave many proofs that the Dasam Granth was written by Guru Gobind Singh.

In 1937, Dr. Jaswant Singh of Lucknow published a series of articles in Amrit magazine. This was scholarly research in which after great effort, giving many proofs from the scripture itself and the style of writing, he concluded that the whole book was written by Guru Gobind Singh.

In 1955, Dr. Tarlochan Singh published his scholarly writing in 4 consecutive issues of Sikh Review, giving the history of the compilation of the Dasam Granth. He provided solid proofs that all the writings in Dasam Granth are those of Guru Gobind Singh.

In 1955, Bhai Randhir Singh, eminent member of Sikh History Society Amritsar, wrote a book entitled Dasme Patshah Ji ka Granth da Itihas ("History of the Tenth Guru's Granth"). After 20 years of labour collecting proofs, he firmly established that the Dasam Granth was written by Guru Gobind Singh. This book was published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee. The first printing was sold out within a few days of its publication, and there was great demand from the public. Ultimately, three printings were made of this publication.

In April 1959, Sardar Kapoor Singh, I.C.S., published an article in the Gurmat Prakash magazine and proved that the whole of the Dasam Granth was written by Guru Gobind Singh.

Dr. Taran Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, published a book in 1967 entitled Dasam Granth Roop te Ras ("Dasam Granth's Form and Taste"). He proved that the whole of the Dasam Granth was written by Guru Gobind Singh. This book was published by the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh. In 1980, Giani Harbans Singh, Chandigarh, wrote the book Dasam Granth Darpan ("Mirror of the Dasam Granth"), and proved that the entire Dasam Granth was written by Guru Gobind Singh.

Professor Piara Singh Padam wrote a book entitled Dasam Granth Darshan, printed in 1968, again proving that the whole scripture was written by Guru Ji.

Pandit Tara Singh Narodam, in his writing, has concurred that the whole of Dasam Granth was written by Guru Gobind Singh.

Bhagwant Singh Hari, son of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabna, wrote Dasam Granth Tuk Tatara ("Line Index of Dasam Granth"), published in 1969. The preface of this book is written by Dr. Balbir Singh, who was younger brother of the, famous scholar Bhai Vir Singh. In that preface, he has written that the entire Dasam Granth is the writing of Guru Gobind Singh.

After 1955, people began research of Dasam Granth to obtain PhD degrees. In 1955 Dr. Dharam Pal Ashta and in 1959 Dr. Harbajan Singh proved in their research papers that the entire Granth was written by Guru Gobind Singh. In 1961, Dr. Parsini Sehgal offered her research paper along the lines of the former two scholars. Dr. Lal Manohar Upadhiya of Benares University, Dr. Om Prakash Bhardwaj of Agra University, Dr. Sushila Devi of Punjab University, Dr. Shamir Singh of Guru Nanak Dev University, Dr. Mohan Jit Singh of Usmaniya University, Dr. Bhushan Sach Dev of Punjabi University, Dr. Nirmal Gupta of Punjabi University, etc.- about two dozen scholars wrote their PhD and DLit research papers on the subject. They have all agreed that the Dasam Granth was written by Guru Sahib. After all this research, it is clearly evident that this scripture is great not only due to its religious aspects but also due to its literary merit. The scholars who have studied the Dasam Granth have written great praises of the high standard of its poetry.

Today the Dasam Granth is being kept open with reverence at Takht Patna Sahib, Takht Sach Khand Hazur Sahib Nander, and all gurdwaras maintained by Nihang Singh. In these places, its

meanings are being explained and hukamnama (holy commandment for the congregation) is also being taken from the scripture.